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ABSTRACT

The conclusion shared by many studies of instruction--that the teacher is the most significant variable in the child's learning process--suggests that the major focus of the efforts of the reading consultant is the classroom teacher. In working with that teacher, the consultant will discover these assumptions about adult learning provide a viable structure: (1) the adult views himself and must be viewed by others as capable of self-direction, (2) the adult's experience constitutes an integral part of his self and is a valuable learning resource, (3) the adult's "now" time perspective requires that learning end in immediate application, and (4) the adult orientation to learning is problem-, not subject matter-, centered. Using a team approach to solve problems encountered in reading instruction, the consultant can lead teachers, other professionals, aides, and parents (as appropriate to the situation) to a consideration and application of the multitude of resources, methods, and programs already in existence. (Author/RD)

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SESSION - UTILIZING READING CONSULTANTS AND CONSULTANT SERVICES

(Effective Utilization of Reading Consultants)

THE CONSULTANT: "ANDRAGOGUE AND PEDAGOGUE"

The decade of the sixties was particularly productive in producing scientific validation of the intuitive assumption held through the previous centuries, the teacher is the most significant variable in the child's learning process.

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Significant among the studies are those reported by Bond and Dykstra, and Harris and Morrison. In the final report of the extensive "First Grade Studies", Bond and Dykstra concluded:

> Future research might well center on teacher and learning situation characteristics rather than method and materials. The tremendous range among classrooms within any method points out the importance of elements in the learning situation over and above the methods employed. To improve reading instruction, it is necessary to train better teachers of reading rather than to expect a panacea in the form of materials. *

Similarly, Harris and Morrison, reporting on the CRAFT Project state, "The results of the study have indicated that the teacher is far more important than the method." ** Other investigations could be cited, but additional findings would merely provide variations on the same theme, the teacher is a creator of learning. Followed to its logical conclusion, this theme suggests that the major focus of the responsibilities of the reading consultant is the classroom teacher.

A model for adult education provided by Knowles *** is ideally suited to a consideration of the essence of this relationship. In discussing "andragogy", the art and science of helping adults to learn, Knowles cites the following assumptions regarding adult

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* Guy L. Bond and Robert Dykstra. "The Cooperative Research Program in First-Grade Reading Instruction," Reading Research Quarterly, 2 (Summer, 1967,), 123.

** Albert J. Harris and Coleman Morrison. "The CRAFT Project: A Final Report," The Reading Teacher, 22 (January, 1969), 339.

*** Malcolm S. Knowles. "Andragogy, Not Pedagogy!" Adult Leadership, 16 (April, 1968), 350-352 & 386.

learners (1) the self-concept of the adult requires that he be viewed by others, as he views himself, as capable of self direction, (2) the experience of the adult learner, an integral part of the self, is a valuable potential resource for learning, (3) the time perspective of the adult is a "now" concept and requires that learning end in immediate application, and, (4) the adult orientation to learning is problem-centered rather than subject-matter centered. These four assumptions, the self-concept, experience, time perspective and orientation to learning provide a viable framework in which to consider the effective utilization of the reading consultant.

To be consistent with the stated assumptions about adult learning, it is appropriate to suggest a possible application of the model within the context of the reading program. Perhaps there is no more effective blending of the elements described here than will be found in the formation of an educational team to include all people, who, through knowledge and experience contribute to the creation of a successful program. The formation of such a team requires a broad view of "education", as used in "educational team." Included in the group are representatives from many worlds: classroom and clinic, administration, counseling and speech, psychology, medicine and social work, library, home and community, college and university - and the world of childhood. Each brings his unique view to the microcosm which is the school.

With the reading consultant serving as group leader, the team engages in defining goals and determining the potential contribution

of each member. The consultant learns from each one and, with the teacher, calls upon the knowledge and experience of the team members in ways appropriate to their talents. This plan may be implemented within any one of a number of patterns. Some possibilities follow: (1) an interdisciplinary approach to diagnosis and remediation may be utilized for a child with a severe reading disability. Involved in the process would be representatives from medicine, psychology, and social work; counseling and speech; the classroom and the home - and the child, himself; (2) a teacher aid program involving representatives of the home and community; the library and resource center; the college or university: the classroom - and the children; (3) a pre-school parent education program including the entire team.

Having defined the objectives and determined an organizational pattern, the team now turns its attention to program implementation. Methods and materials are chosen as tools designed to meet program needs, and more significantly, the needs of the teacher who justifies their being. Evaluation is considered an integral part of the learning process as procedures are selected which make it possible for diagnostic findings to become a blueprint for program building. Change is anticipated as a natural event in a living organization, but change will come of informed appraisal. And the consultant guides the planning and with the teacher and children works toward the stated goals. Short term goals are defined for individual progress when the teacher perceives each accomplishment as a point along a continuum leading to the long range goal, that of the lifelong learner.

It was Toffler who recalled Gerjuoy's admonition. "Tomorrow's illiterate will not be the man who can't read; he will be the man who has not learned how to learn." *

There remains, then, the question of process, the related assumptions concerned with time perspective (application) and orientation (problem centered).

The literature is replete with models of the reading process and of methods devised to facilitate learning; the catalogues are abundant in materials designed to assist in process and method. There is little need to create additional models, methods or materials; there is great need to create teachers who are knowledgeable about the process, skillful in methodology and perceptive in the selection and use of materials. The theorists in reading and its related disciplines have provided substantial knowledge; the researchers have investigated cause and effect; it is the task of the consultant to join with the teacher in applying this knowledge to classroom practice.

Knowles' problem-centered approach is a logical strategy and may be adapted in a variety of ways. Again, one model will be suggested, in the hope that the one will generate many.

An in-service program might be planned with its stated goal, the application of knowledge to practice in any aspect selected

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* Alvin Toffler. Future Shock. New York: Random House, 1970, p. 414.

by the group. Teachers would study models of the reading process in relation to methodology and materials. Attempts to solve the problem of application should lead participants to the professional literature in the form of journals, conference proceedings, research reports, texts and monographs. Professional affiliations become vital and professional conferences, and meetings are a logical extension of this relationsip. Materials exhibits in the convention hall provide a new field for investigation.

Workshop sessions focus on adapting and perfecting methodology and establishing evaluative criteria for materials selection and use. Microteaching sessions may be an integral part of the experience or participants may choose to videotape or demonstrate their personal attempts at application to share with the group. The consultant may initiate or add to the repetoire.

Student teachers will find a welcome place in all activities and teacher aides will choose those activities appropriate to their backgrounds and the roles they will assume. Members of the educational team serve as on-going consultants and the library and I.M.C. provide material resources.

Activities of this type tend to generate research projects as problems are identified, hypotheses formed, solutions tried, conclusions determined and findings shared.

This model lends itself to adaptation to other problems, in affective as well as cognitive domains. The former might include the self concept, motivation, bibliotherapy; the latter the relationship

of thinking abilities to comprehension, linguistics and reading, behavioral objectives. Only the imagination limits the possibilities.

The roles of learner and teacher are mutually enhancing, perhaps in few disciplines more than reading, in few roles more than the consultancy. As a learner, the consultant is engaged in a continual search for knowledge of theoretical and applied aspects of reading and its related disciplines; of the people he serves; and of the total program, developmental preventive and remedial, designed to meet the needs of the individuals and of the times. As a teacher, the consultant attempts to effect positive cognitive and effective change in the persons and agencies he serves through guiding the refinement and evaluation of mutual goals, sharing knowledge and generating new information through research and most significantly, facilitating the application of this knowledge to curriculum development, methodology services and evaluation.

Just as it has been shown that the teacher is the most significant element in pedagogy, so it may be concluded that the consultant is the most significant element in andragogy. The mutual roles of learner and teacher appear to hold promise for a continuous learning-teaching-learning cycle for both consultant and teacher of reading.

"Wakeful happiness should be the best condition of man." *

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* Frank G. Jennings. This is Reading. New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1965, p. 196.

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2. Harris, Albert J., and Coleman, Morrison. "The CRAFT Project: A Final Report," the Reading Teacher, 22 (January, 1969), 335-340.

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5. Alvin Toffler. Future Shock. New York: Random House, 1970.